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FIGHTIN' ARMY
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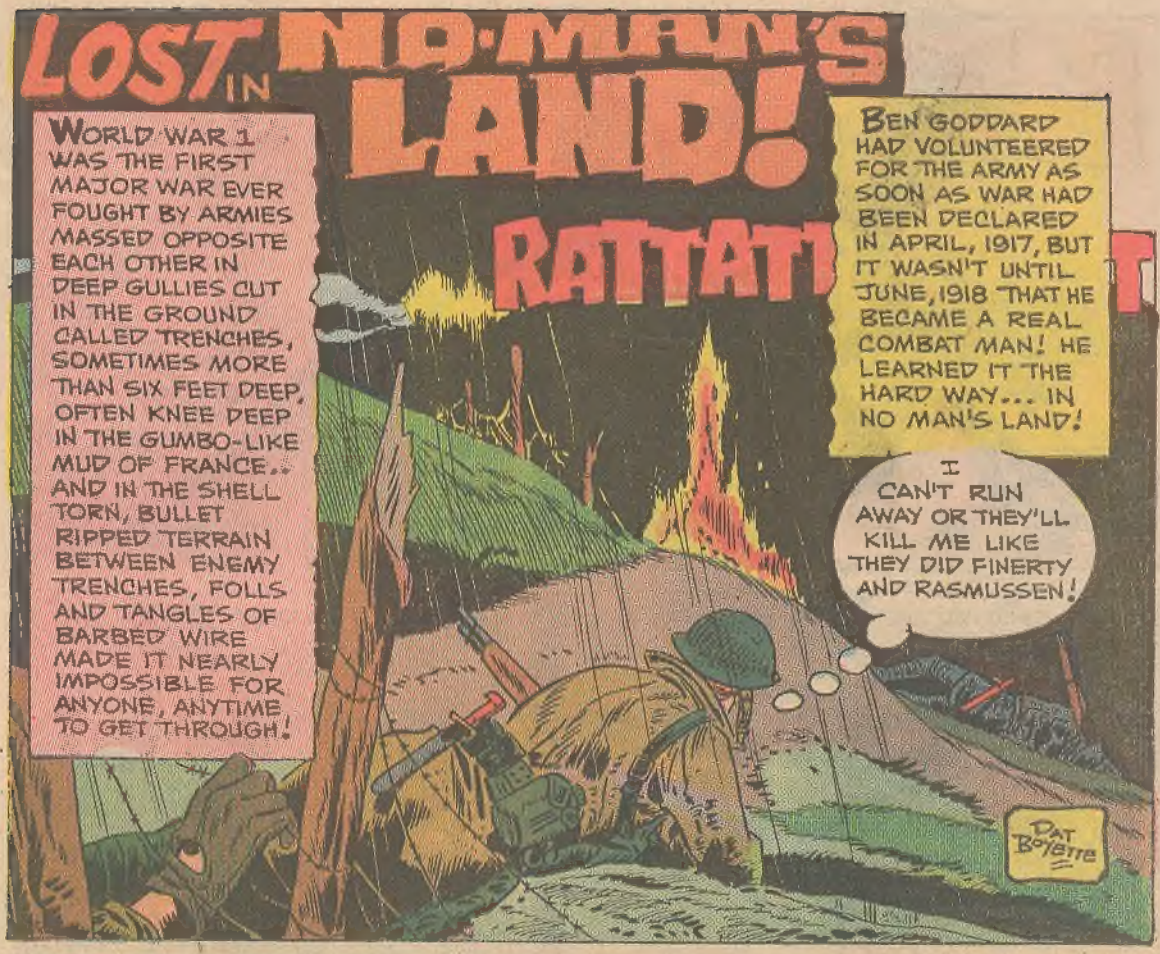
LOST IN NO-MAN'S LAND!
WORLD WAR 1 WAS THE FIRST MAJOR WAR EVER FOUGHT BY ARMIES MASSED OPPOSITE EACH OTHER IN DEEP GULLIES CUT IN THE GROUND CALLED TRENCHES, SOMETIMES MORE THAN SIX FEET DEEP, OFTEN KNEE DEEP IN THE GUMBO-LIKE MUD OF FRANCE.. AND IN THE SHELL TORN, BULLET RIPPED TERRAIN BETWEEN ENEMY TRENCHES, FOLLS AND TANGLES OF BARBED WIRE MADE IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE, ANYTIME, TO GET THROUGH!
RATTATI
BEN GODDARD HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR THE ARMY AS SOON AS WAR HAD BEEN DECLARED IN APRIL, 1917, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL JUNE, 1918 THAT HE BECAME A REAL COMBAT MAN! HE LEARNED IT THE HARD WAY... IN NO MAN'S LAND!
I CAN'T RUN AWAY OR THEY'LL KILL ME LIKE THEY DID FINERTY AND RASMUSSEN!
DAT BOYETTE

FIGHTIN' ARMY

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BLAM
I'VE GOTTA MAKE A RUN FOR IT!
THEY SPOTTED ME .. BUT I GOTTA KEEP GOING...
DAMM THIS BARBED WIRE .. CAN'T GET THROUGH...
ON THE AMERICAN SIDE, A LIEUTENANT WAS SCANNING NO-MAN'S LAND .. HE SAW BEN AND REACHED FOR A FIELD PHONE...
ONE OF OUR GUYS IS CAUGHT IN THE WIRE .. LAY SOME SMOKE SHELLS ON THE GERMAN LINES, PRONTO!
OH, GOD.. I'M DONE FOR...

SMOKE SCREEN .. I'M SAVED!
THE SMOKE IS DRIFTIN' AWAY... I GOTTA GET LOOSE!
ZIE SCHWEINHUNDT GOT AWAY!
THE REST OF THE PATROL GOT BACK .. THE ONES THAT WEREN'T KILLED!

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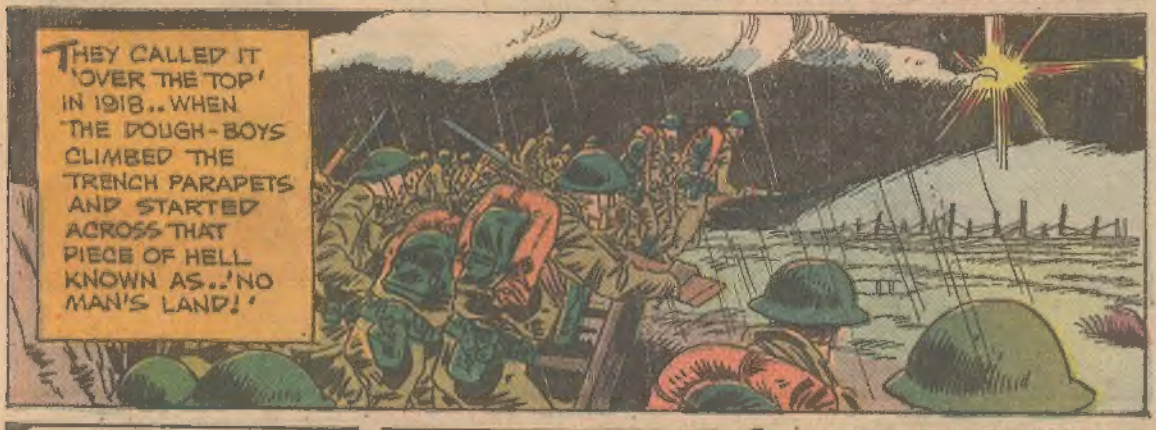
GOTT IM HIMMEL! EIN AMERIKANER!
KRAUT!
SORRY, FRITZ! NO ALARM!
DUG-OUT!
IF ANYBODY'S IN THERE.. THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF 'EM!
WHAT'D THEY PUT IN THAT GRENADE?
BLOOM

IN THE AMERICAN TRENCHES WHERE SECOND DIVISION DOUGHBOYS WERE PEERING INTO NO-MAN'S-LAND, A COLONEL HEARD THE EXPLOSION.. HE COULD EVEN HEAR THE GERMANS SHOUTING CONFUSED ORDERS..SO HE MADE A SUDDEN DECISION..
THE BATTALION WILL ATTACK .. RIGHT NOW!


THEY CALLED IT 'OVER THE TOP' IN 1918.. WHEN THE DOUGH-BOYS CLIMBED THE TRENCH PARAPETS AND STARTED ACROSS THAT PIECE OF HELL KNOWN AS..'NO MAN'S LAND!'

THE AMERICAN ASSAULT SWEPT OVER THE DEMORALIZED GERMANS WHO SURRENDERED IN GREAT NUMBERS... AND P.F.C. BEN GODDARD WAS CONGRATULATED BY THE BATTALION COMMANDER...

I SHALL RECOMMEND YOU FOR THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL, SOLDIER! YOUR BRAVERY AND DARING HAS DONE MUCH FOR YOUR COUNTRY TONIGHT!
END

the WEAPON that nearly WON the WAR!

WARREN SATTLER

WILLY MESSERSCHMITT WAS THE GERMAN GENIUS WHO DESIGNED THE MOST WIDELY USED GERMAN FIGHTER OF WORLD WAR II, THE ME-109! IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE WAR, THE CLASSIC DUELS WERE FOUGHT BETWEEN THE NAZI FIGHTER AND THE BRITISH SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE!

IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN, THE ME-109'S WERE HANDICAPPED BY LACK OF TIME OVER TARGET... AFTER FLYING FROM THEIR HOME FIELDS AND RESERVING ENOUGH GAS TO RETURN, IF A NAZI FIGHTER WAS DAMAGED, THE PILOT HAD LITTLE CHANCE TO RETURN TO BASE... WHILE DAMAGED BRITISH PLANES MADE IT TO THEIR FIELDS!

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN WAS FOUGHT IN THE AIR IN 1940... AND THE ME-109'S NEARLY WON IT FOR HITLER!, BUT IN THE END, THEY JUST WEREN'T ENOUGH...

The End

NOTHING TO LOSE

IF EVER ANYONE HAD LITTLE OR NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, IT WAS CPL. KEN DUTTON....HE WAS WITH THE EIGHTH ARMY IN KOREA. HE'D BEEN BATTERED AROUND BY THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS WHEN THEY SWARMED ACROSS THE YALU RIVER, AND THEN LT. WILLIAMS STARTED RIDING HIS TAIL! WITH ALL HE HAD ON HIS MIND, IT WAS MORE THAN HE COULD TAKE SO....

THE PLATOON LEADER SHOULDN'T HAVE BUGGED DUTTON....HIS CHICK JUST *DEAR JAWNED* HIM....HE LOST NEXT MONTH'S PAY IN THE *PAYDAY CRAP GAME*....

AN' HE GOT THE WORST CASE OF *ATHLETE'S FEET* I EVER SEEN! I DON'T BLAME DUTTON.... I WOULDA BELTED *THE GENERAL* IF I WAS HIM!

THAT DID IT, DUTTON! YOU'LL GET A COURT-MARTIAL FOR THIS!

AWW, LIEUTENANT, I DIDN'T MEAN....

ARE YOU APOLOGIZING, SOLDIER? SPEAK UP LOUD AND CLEAR SO....

I WOULDN'T APOLOGIZE TO YOU IF I WAS GONNA GET SHOT IN THE MORNIN', LIEUTENANT!

D-5595

ART By WM. MOLNO

I PUT YA IN FOR SERGEANT AND YA GOOF OFF ON ME, DUTTON! NOW, THE LIEUTENANT'S PREFERIN' CHARGES FOR ASSAULTIN' AN OFFICER!
I DON'T CARE, SARGE!
GIT DOWN!
WHAMM
TAKKA TAKKA
WHY? I DON'T CARE IF I GET HIT OR NOT!
THE SITUATION GOT WORSE... THE CHICOMS OUTFLANKED THEM ...GOT BEHIND ABLE COMPANY... AND CUT THEM OFF FROM BATTALION!
YA PROB'LY WON'T HAVE TA WORRY ABOUT GETTIN' COURT-MARTIALED, DUTTON....THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE WE'LL ALL BE DEAD BY MORNIN'!
VALERIE'S GONNA MARRY THAT SCHOOL-TEACHER....I'VE GOT NO LOOT FOR WHEN WE DO GET SOME REST AND RECREATION IN JAPAN.... AND LT. WILLIAMS WANTS TUH HAVE ME SHOT FOR BELTIN' HIM!

THEN, A COOK CAME BY...WITH HOT THERMOS JUGS FULL OF HOT COFFEE AND SANDWICHES! CPL. DUTTON PUT HIS COFFEE AND SANDWICH DOWN, SECURED HIS RIFLE, AND REACHED FOR HIS COFFEE....
COFFEE AND A SANDWICH WILL SURE TASTE GOO....
TAKKA TAKKA
PING
PING
I'LL GET YA... JUST WAIT AND SEE.... I'LL GET YA FOR THAT!
PING! PING!
SHUT UP, DUTTON!
THEN IT WAS DARK ..THE ENEMY HAD THEM PINNED DOWN IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY'D GET WIPED OUT!
YA MEAN WHEN THE COMMIES GET READY THEY'LL JUST WALK RIGHT OVER US?
THEY'LL HIT US WITH A BARRAGE FIRST, CORPORAL! THEN, WHEN WE'RE REALLY CLOBBERED, THE CH COM INFANTRY WILL HIT!
I DON'T SEE ANY SENSE IN WAITIN' HERE TUH DIE, SARGE!

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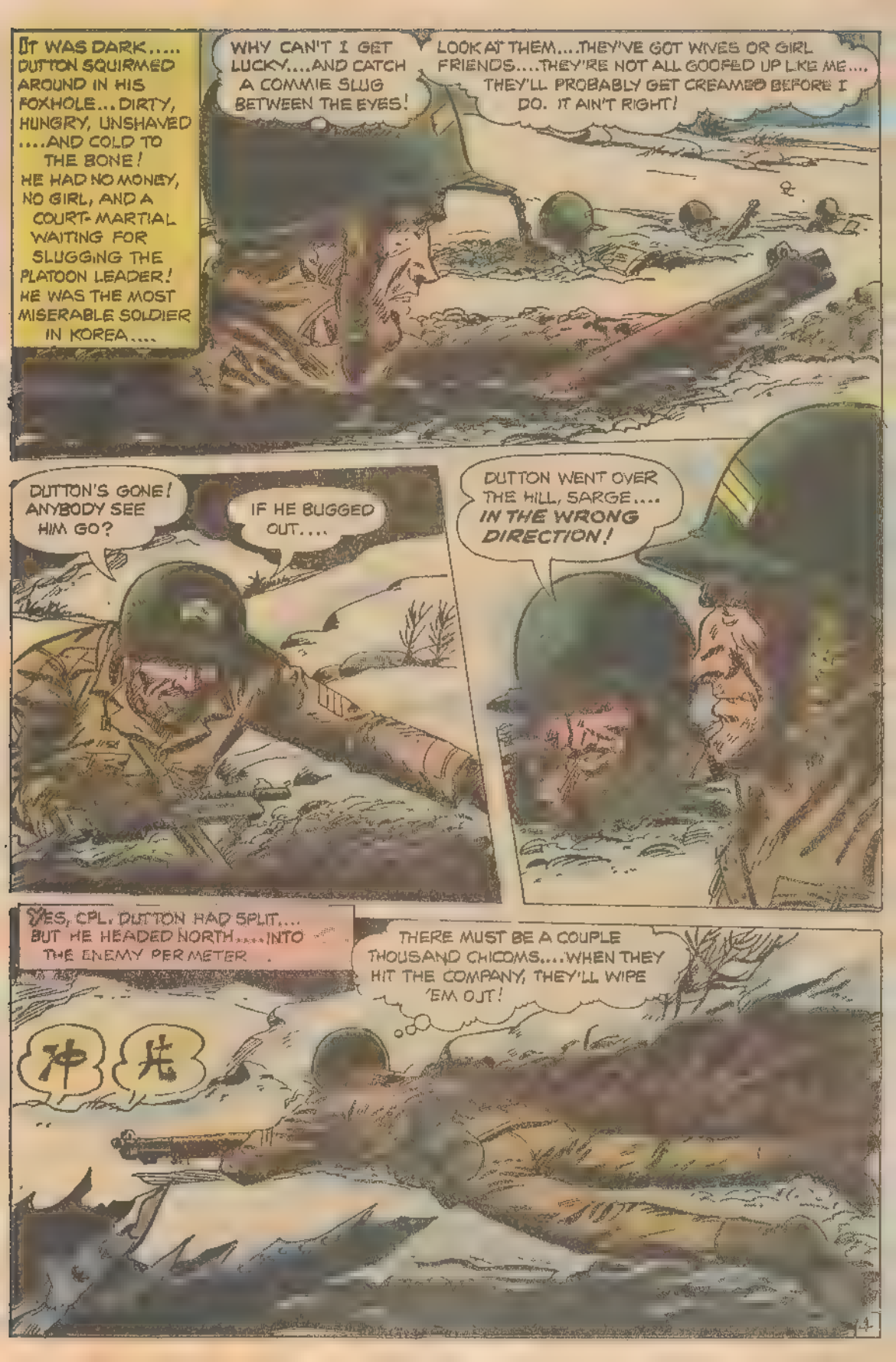
IT WAS DARK..... DUTTON SQUIRMED AROUND IN HIS FOXHOLE... DIRTY, HUNGRY, UNSHAVED ....AND COLD TO THE BONE! HE HAD NO MONEY, NO GIRL, AND A COURT-MARTIAL WAITING FOR SLUGGING THE PLATOON LEADER! HE WAS THE MOST MISERABLE SOLDIER IN KOREA....
WHY CAN'T I GET LUCKY....AND CATCH A COMMIE SLUG BETWEEN THE EYES!
LOOK AT THEM....THEY'VE GOT WIVES OR GIRL FRIENDS....THEY'RE NOT ALL GOOFED UP LIKE ME.... THEY'LL PROBABLY GET CREAMED BEFORE I DO. IT AIN'T RIGHT!
DUTTON'S GONE! ANYBODY SEE HIM GO?
IF HE BUGGED OUT....
DUTTON WENT OVER THE HILL, SARGE.... IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!
YES, CPL. DUTTON HAD SPLIT.... BUT HE HEADED NORTH.....INTO THE ENEMY PERIMETER
THERE MUST BE A COUPLE THOUSAND CHICOMS....WHEN THEY HIT THE COMPANY, THEY'LL WIPE 'EM OUT!
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THE GOOKS WERE MASSED FOR AN ATTACK. GROUPS OF TROOPS MOVING UP IN THE DARKNESS. A LONE SAMPAN PULLS AWAY FROM THE SHORE. LIEUTENANT DUTTON...UNTIL HE LOBBED THE FIRST GRENADE RIGHT INTO A BUNCH OF THEM!
WHAM!
BAM BAM BAM
I THOUGHT I DIDN'T CARE IF I GOT CREAMED ....BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN I DO CARE!
THE CHICOMS HAD HIM ZEROED IN...SO DUTTON DOVE FOR THE NEAREST SHELTER HE COULD FIND...
THIS IS GREAT NOW I'M REALLY IN TROUBLE!
BAM BAM
PING
PING
PING

I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE....BUT I'LL DO WHAT I CAN BEFORE THEY GET ME!
HE HAD A GRENADE....HE PULLED THE PIN, SCRAMBLED TO THE TOP OF THE BANK, AND FLIPPED IT BACK INTO THE COMMAND POST
BAM BAM
WHAM
HE STUMBLED ON THE T34 TANKS, FOUR OF THEM....IN A GULLY, WAITING FOR FUEL FROM DRUMS OF FUEL! HE COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS LUCK...AND HE WORMED HIS WAY DOWNHILL...TRYING TO GET WITHIN GRENADE RANGE!
I'VE GOT ANOTHER GRENADE....I GOTTA MAKE IT COUNT!
SCRATCH ONE COMMAND POST!
NOW!
BAM BAM
BAM BAM

GOT IT!
WHAM
A CHAIN REACTION WAS SET OFF FROM THE FUEL OF THE FIRST TANK EXPLODING....
WHAM WHAM
THERE GOES THE THIRD TANK....
THOSE ARE 155 MM SHELLS... I MADE ENOUGH NOISE TO ALERT OUR GUYS ANYHOW!
WHAAMM
WHAAMM
THE CHICOM BANZAI ATTACK DIDN'T COME OFF.....WITH DUTTON BEHIND THEIR LINES, THE TANKS BLAZING AND EXPLODING, AND U.S. HEAVY ARTILLERY ZEROED IN ON THEM, IT ALL GOT TURNED AROUND!
HOLD IT, JIGGS.... THAT'S DUTTON....HE'S THE GUY WHO SAVED THE OUTFIT!
DUTTON COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS LUCK... HE WAS STILL ALIVE....THERE WAS NO COURT-MARTIAL WAITING...AND THE GUYS HE OWED MONEY FROM THE CRAP GAME WERE PRETTY GENEROUS!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT R & R IN TOKYO, BUDDY...I'M A WINNER IN THAT GAME.... THE WHOLE LEAVE IS ON ME!
I THOUGHT WE'D GET CREAMED FOR SURE, DUTTON! IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LET ME KNOW!
THE END

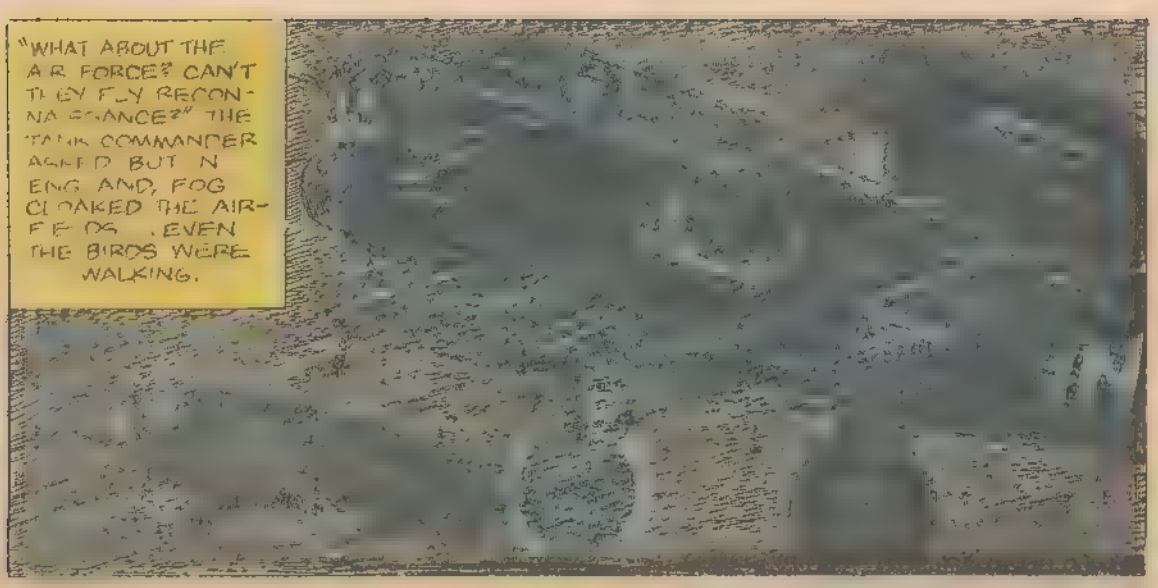
A CITY WILL DIE

WHEN MARSHAL VON RUNSTEDT COMMANDING GERMAN ARMOR DIVERTED A COLUMN OF HEAVY TANKS INTO THE PEACEFUL LITTLE CITY OF GEMBLIX IN DECEMBER, 1944, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THE COMMUNITY HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN THE STORMS OF WAR! PANZERKAPITAN OTTO WEPPLER STATIONED THE WAR SCARRED MONSTERS IN THE QUIET STREETS AND WAITED! SMALL BELGIAN CHILDREN WATCHED WIDE-EYED AS THE TOUGH COMBAT CREWS OF THE TANKS WAITED FOR THE BATTLE THAT WOULD SOON BEGIN...

GRANDFATHER JOHN FROM RAIDER ABLE ONE. WHAT'S THE POOP? WHERE ARE ALL THE KRAUTS?

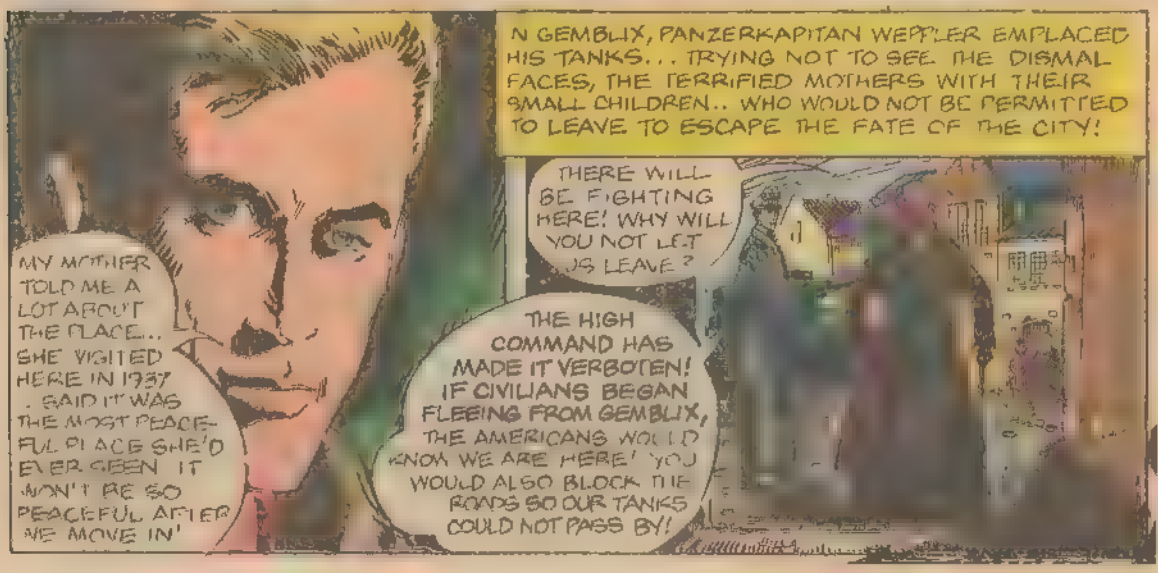
A NEW PERSHING M-26 TANK RUMBLED [illegible] OF A COLUMN OF GERMAN M-4 MEDIUM TANKS [illegible] TAKING THE ROAD THROUGH GEMBLIX... UNAWARE THE NAZI ARMOR WAITING AMBUSH THEM WHEN THEY ENTERED GEMBLIX!

BITE YOUR TONGUE, RAIDER ABLE ONE! YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND MORE THAN YOU CAN USE! THERE ARE A QUARTER-MILLION NAZIS WANDERING AROUND IN THIS AREA!


"WHAT ABOUT THE AIR FORCE? CAN'T THEY FLY RECONNAISSANCE?" THE TANK COMMANDER ASKED BUT NOTHING AND, FOG CLOAKED THE AIRFIELDS. EVEN THE BIRDS WERE WALKING.

HUNGER STOPPED THE TANKS SIX MILES SOUTH WEST OF GEMBLIX. NOT HUMAN HUNGER BUT HUNGRY ENGINES IN THE TANKS... THEY NEEDED FUEL
FIND OUT HOW LONG IT'LL BE BEFORE THE FUEL TRUCKS GET HERE.

GEMBLIX? FUNNY... I NEVER HEARD OF THE PLACE!
THEY'VE BEEN LUCKY .. WHEN I WAS BRIEFED, THEY TOLD ME THE TOWN WAS NEVER BOMBED OR SHELLED!


IN GEMBLIX, PANZERKAPITAN WEPPLER EMPLACED HIS TANKS... TRYING NOT TO SEE THE DISMAL FACES, THE TERRIFIED MOTHERS WITH THEIR SMALL CHILDREN.. WHO WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE TO ESCAPE THE FATE OF THE CITY!
MY MOTHER TOLD ME A LOT ABOUT THE PLACE.. SHE VISITED HERE IN 1937 . SAID IT WAS THE MOST PEACEFUL PLACE SHE'D EVER SEEN IT WON'T BE SO PEACEFUL AFTER WE MOVE IN!
THERE WILL BE FIGHTING HERE! WHY WILL YOU NOT LET US LEAVE?
THE HIGH COMMAND HAS MADE IT VERBOTEN! IF CIVILIANS BEGAN FLEEING FROM GEMBLIX, THE AMERICANS WOULD KNOW WE ARE HERE! YOU WOULD ALSO BLOCK THE ROADS SO OUR TANKS COULD NOT PASS BY!

YOU WILL SACRIFICE US ALL FOR NOTHING, CAPTAIN! GERMANY HAS ALREADY LOST THE WAR... YOU MUST KNOW THAT AS WELL AS I!
PERHAPS, FRAULEIN... BUT I AM A GERMAN OFFICER... I MUST DO MY DUTY AND OBEY ORDERS!
DARKNESS CAME. OBERSTKAPITAN WETTLER, HAVING DONE ALL HE COULD TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE, STROLLED OFF... THINKING OF HIS OWN WIFE AND CHILDREN... IN A GERMAN CITY THAT HAD BEEN BOMBED REPEATEDLY!
SOON IT WILL BE OVER... THE STUPID KILLING AND DESTRUCTION... I FEEL SO SAD ABOUT GEMBLIX AND THE PEOPLE IN IT!
THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY FOR MEN TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES.
SOMEONE IS THERE... ON THAT FENCE!
DON'T MOVE, KRAUT! I'VE GOT A GUN CENTERED ON YOUR WISHBONE!
SHOOT AND WE BOTH DIE, SCHWEIN... I, TOO, HAVE A GUN!
3

IF THERE'D BEEN A BATTLE RAGING... OR ANY HOUR OF THE DAY...THESE ENEMIES WOULD'VE ACTED... BUT IT WAS DUSK...ON THE EVE OF BATTLE...IN A PEACEFUL COUNTRYSIDE!
I'M LT. GENE REDMOND YOU'RE A PANZERKAPITAN ...TANK CORPS, RIGHT?
YOUR EYES ARE SHARP, LIEUTENANT! I AM PANZERKAPITAN OTTO WEPPLER...
YOUR TANKS ARE IN GEMBLIX NOW, AREN'T THEY, CAPTAIN? WHEN I SEE IT, IT'LL BE A PILE OF RUBBLE. WHAT'S IT LIKE NOW?
THERE ARE NO INDUSTRIES THERE, AS YOU KNOW... IT IS OFF THE MAIN ROADS WAR HAS PASSED IT BY UNTIL NOW!
THAT'S GREAT! SO I BRING IN MY TANKS AND WE SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER...PLUS A FEW HUNDRED CIVILIANS WHO AREN'T EVEN IN THE WAR! WHY? WHY DID YOU PICK GEMBLIX TO MAKE A STAND?
I DID NOT
IF IT WERE MY DECISION, YANK, I WOULD MOVE MY TANKS OUT...BUT WE MUST FIGHT EACH OTHER TOMORROW... THAT IS THE PLACE!
IT'S SAD... BECAUSE I'M GOING TO WIPE YOU OUT!

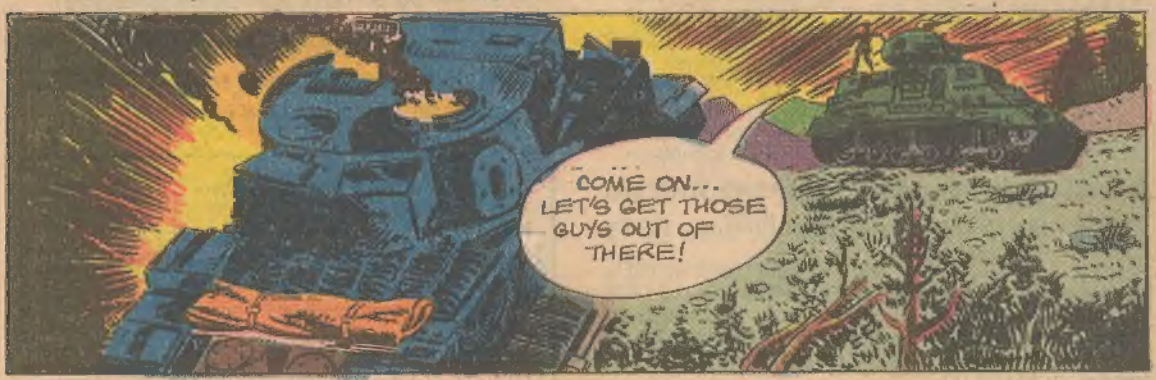
YOU HAVE MORE AIRCRAFT, MORE MEN, MORE GUNS... MORE OF EVERYTHING... BUT, MAN-FOR-MAN, TANK-FOR-TANK, WE GERMANS ARE SUPERIOR!
YOU NAZI SUPERMEN GIVE ME A PAIN IN THE NECK! I WISH WE COULD SETTLE JUST HOW SUPERIOR YOU ARE!
WAIT A MINUTE... DO YOU WANT TO MAKE IT TANK-TO-TANK? PULL OUT OF GEMBLIX ..SLUG IT OUT WITH MY TANKS SOMEWHERE ELSE?
I WILL BE COURT-MARTIALED FOR DISOBEYING ORDERS, LIEUTENANT... BUT, YES, I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE! DO YOU HAVE A FLASHLIGHT? ...AND LET US BOTH PUT AWAY THESE STUPID WEAPONS!
I'VE GOT A LIGHT, WEPPLER.
THIS IS THE FIELD NORTH OF WHERE WE ARE NOW. I WILL POSITION MY TANK HERE BEFORE DAWN ...YOU BE HERE! AT 0600 HOURS, OUR BATTLE BEGINS!
OKAY, WEPPLER... GO BACK AND PULL YOUR TANKS OUT OF GEMBLIX... WE'LL STAY OUT OF THERE TOO!
IF YOU TRICK ME, LIEUTENANT...
LISTEN, FRITZ... I'M SICK OF KILLING... IF WE CAN CUT IT DOWN A LITTLE, MAYBE I'LL FEEL BETTER ABOUT THIS WAR!
I SHARE YOUR FEELINGS, LIEUTENANT!
5

IN TOWN, PANZERKAPITAN SNAPPED ORDERS TO HIS ASTONISHED TANK COMMANDERS...
WE ARE MOVING OUT OF GEMBLIX IMMEDIATELY, HERR LIEUTENANT! TAKE COMMAND OF THE UNIT AND DEPLOY NORTHEAST OF GEMBLIX!
Y-YOU AREN'T GOING TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY IN GEMBLIX, MONSIEUR?
NO, OLD MAN ...THE BATTLE WILL TAKE PLACE SOUTH-WEST OF TOWN!
OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED...THE GERMANS ARE LEAVING GEMBLIX!
MERCI, MON DIEU!
LT. REMOND RETURNED TO HIS COMMAND...THE THREE OTHERS IN HIS OWN HEAVY TANK RECEIVED THE NEWS...
WE'RE TAKING ON A KRAUT TANK HEAD-TO-HEAD AT 0600 HOURS, BOYS! I'D BETTER TELL YOU WHY...
HE DID...THEY WERE QUIET AWHILE, THEN SGT. KLEIN SPOKE...
SOUNDS LIKE AN OKAY GUY, LIEUTENANT. AFTER YOU TOLD US ABOUT GEMBLIX I FELT BAD ABOUT WRECKIN' THE PLACE!
HE WAS OKAY! AND HE'S A SMART COOKIE! WE'RE LIABLE TO GET KNOCKED OUT OF THE BALLPARK TOMORROW!
6

AT 0545 HOURS, THE NAZI TANK RUMBLED THROUGH THE DENSE BRUSH AND STOPPED WITH THE LONG-BARRELED 80MM CANNON POKING THROUGH THE FOLIAGE, COVERING THE FIELD!
ZIE AMERIKANER, HERR KAPITAN?
CAN'T SEE HIM, REICHEL!
HE'S PLAYING IT COOL... HE'S SOMEWHERE NEAR THE FIELD... BUT HE WON'T COME OUT IN THE OPEN!
HOLD IT RIGHT HERE, SERGEANT!
SCANNING THE FIELDS, LT. REDMOND SAW NOTHING... THE DEEP BRUSH AND TREES ACROSS THE OPEN GROUND HID THE NAZI TANK FROM VIEW UNTIL SUDDENLY A RABBIT BROKE OUT, RUNNING ZIGZAG...
TARGET BEARING 057 DEGREES, RANGE 270 YARDS, FIRE THREE ROUNDS H.E.!
GET DOWN... CLOSE ALL HATCHES!
7

NOW, THE NAZI TANK BACKED DEEPER INTO THE BRUSH... THE ENGINES ROARED AS IT LEFT THE AREA OF EXPLODING SHELLS...
THOSE AREN'T 70MM SHELLS ...THEY'RE HIGH-VELOCITY LARGE CALIBER...MUST BE 90MM!
WHAM!
TURN LEFT 90 DEGREES, REICHEL! GUNNER, STAND BY...
FEUER!
THE 80MM ARMOR-PIERCING SHELL HIT THE U.S. M-26 TANK ...BUT ON THE THICK ARMORED TURRET...AT AN ANGLE SO IT RICOCHETED!
THERE GO THE EAR-DRUMS, SKIPPER!
WHAMM
DIRECT HIT...HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE. LOAD WITH ARMOR-PIERCING...THE NEXT ROUND WILL END IT!
BARROOM
8

AS THESE MODERN MONSTERS DUELED TOWARD DEATH, HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS OF GEMBLIX WATCHED ...IN SHOCK AND SORROW, AT LAST SEEING SOME OF THE HORROR OF WAR!



THE NAZI TANK WAS A FLAMING BOMB... IT WOULD EXPLODE AT ANY SECOND... LT. REDMOND AND HIS CREW KNEW IT BETTER THAN ANYONE BUT...

I FAILED IN MY DUTY TO DER VATERLAND, LIEUTENANT!
YOU DID YOUR BEST, CAPTAIN... AND THE CITIZENS OF GEMBLIX WILL NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH WE DID FOR THEM TODAY!

BUT THEY KNEW ...AND IN 1970, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THE CITY HELD A PARTY FOR TWO MEN...OTTO WEPPLER, A CIVIL ENGINEER FROM GERMANY, AND GENE REDMOND AN INSURANCE MAN FROM BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

the BIGGEST BLUFF!

The secret meeting took place outside of London during what has been called, "England's Bleakest Hour." Everyone, from the little tots to the very old, knew that the Nazi invasion of their country was merely a matter of days. What to do? That was the issue of the hour. The Prime Minister and others charged with the defense of the country were assembled.

Field Marshal Thomas Bennett was the oldest military man in service. He had fought with distinction in the Boer War. During World War I, he had twice turned what looked like defeat into victory. He had passed the age of retirement, but had been asked to continue in his capacity.

"The Home Guard is ready to fight to the last man," announced Major John Taylor. "They will be at the beachheads when the Nazi invasion boats attempt to land their men."

"And with what will they fight?" questioned the Field Marshal. "The rifles you have armed them with are those that we have long since discarded, and you haven't even thirty rounds of ammunition for each of your men. That they are willing to die, this I do not question. But it would be futile."

"During the evacuation from Dunkirk," began Captain Henry Jordan, "we were able to mobilize a fleet of fishing boats as well as private boats. This armada will go out to battle as did our ancestors during the attempted invasion in 1588 of the Spaniards."

"If the gods of the Seas can whip up a storm to upset the Nazi invasion fleet and leave our little ships untouched, then it may work out. But forget it. Better keep the boats in port," replied the Field Marshal. "Even the highest bravery is no substitute for good weapons and a good plan of attack."

"We still have serviceable planes left in the R.A.F.," said Wing Commander Charles Leighley. "I will send up every plane. We will bombard their invasion fleet."

"You saved these planes during the Nazi bombardment of London and of other places along our coast," pointed out the Field Marshal. "And now you want to make a brave defiant gesture. Their planes are just waiting to meet ours in one big aerial combat. We will need them later."

"I have eight submarines, ten destroyers, and some old frigates we can use," sighed Lord George Amory. "Being in charge of the Admiralty without a fleet makes me heartbroken. But I shall go out with them. We shall fight to the last man and the last ship."

"All of you are thinking along the wrong track," smiled the Field Marshal. "With due respect to our beloved Prime Minister, who convoked this emergency meeting, you are all thinking of what we are to do when the Nazi invasion begins. I have some very pleasant news for you. The invasion will not take place."

For a few minutes, there was a complete silence in the room. Then Sir Paul Williams in charge of the counter-espionage organization arose from his seat and spoke.

"I have definite proof that the invasion will take place," he began. "We know that Hitler had his newsmen make pictures of the landing of his troops off the coast of Norway. He will show these films as soon as his troops land here. Now what are we going to do about it?"

"The Nazis will not invade England," half shouted an angry Field Marshal. "You are not listening to me. So I will make it clearer. Through our Ambassador in Madrid, I notified Hitler not to invade England. I told him why it would be a failure, and he agreed. So he will do something else."

"What did you tell him?" asked the Prime Minister in amazement.

"That will be my secret until the war is over. My aide, Colonel Harvey Beckenbridge, has the paper in his custody with what I informed Hitler about our plans to smash him. He had no choice but to believe me. Now gentlemen, let us toast our victory. We shall win, we shall win."

The old Field Marshal was right. Hitler did not invade England. But what was the secret? That old man lived to be 95 and then died. A month after his death, and two years after the end of the war, Colonel-now General-Harvey Beckenbridge did inform the group of the message:

"Hitler was told that if the Nazis dared to invade England, then we would use our supply of poison gas to wipe them out. We then would announce that we no longer felt ourselves bound by the Geneva Convention not to use poison gas. Hitler and his staff did believe it. Of course, they did not know we had no supply of poison gas. The biggest bluff worked."